

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 4, 2014

Economic Development Administration
Office of Performance & National Programs
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Suite 71030
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Interagency Review Panel:

We are writing in support of the New Mexico Advanced Photonics Manufacturing Consortium's application to be designated as a Manufacturing Community. In response to the President's call for a National Network for Manufacturing and Innovation (NNMI), a collaboration of National Laboratories, industry, universities, community colleges, local governments, and non-profit organizations have come together in New Mexico.

The consortium has developed a complete proposal for the U.S. Economic Development Administration's open solicitation for the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) program. The consortium's unique public-private partnership is building on New Mexico's core capabilities and strengths in optics and photonics, and leveraging our region's innovative capacity to sustain and grow United States leadership in the application of light based technologies.

Optics and photonics address and solve many of the challenges of the modern world, and we want those solutions to be researched, developed and manufactured in the United States. Light-based technologies directly respond to the needs of humankind. The modern technology around you – your phone, computer, TV – and the communications technologies that enable these devices to function are all made possible largely by optics and photonics. Other technologies benefit from optics and photonics as well, including advanced manufacturing, robotics, medical imaging, next-generation displays, defense technologies, biometric security, image processing, communications, and many others.

In 2012, the National Academies National Research Council released a Report, "Optics and Photonics, Essential Technologies for Our Nation," which emphasized the importance of these technologies. The United Nations proclaimed 2015 as the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies, showing the international significance of these technologies. Because photonics is a very broad field, the consortium has evaluated several strategic focus areas, to determine the scope of each opportunity.

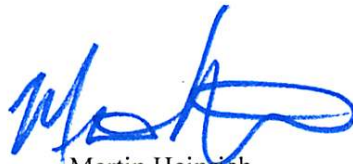
Optics and photonics technology represents a field of science and engineering full of pathways for commercial, industrial and military applications. Each of these applications provides an opportunity to improve our national security and competitive advantage in the global market through innovative manufacturing technologies.

We are in strong support of this broad collaborative effort, and request that you give the New Mexico Advanced Photonics Manufacturing Consortium's submission full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Stevan Pearce
United States Representative



Ben Ray Luján
United States Representative



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